

This Land Is Your Land, This Land is My Land: Refugees, Migration, and Open Borders Lesson Plan

Developed by Leslie Hosgood

Objective: For students to consider perspective of communication and question power structures, narratives, and the concept of open borders.

Overview of lesson: Students will view images of graffiti from refugees. Students will analyze the message presented in these images and a podcast about border to examine the impact of conflict and migration policy.

Learning statement: I can analyze images to develop an understanding of narrative. I can develop an argument about policies that encourage and discourage open borders.

Length of lesson: Two 45-minute class periods

Procedure:

1. **Create a copy of the images on the handout**
 - **Photo credit: Kathryn Metz**
2. **Place students in small groups and pass out copies of images to each student**
3. **Write the word “narrative” on the board** – ask students to explain what narratives are
 - Challenge them to consider who has the power to tell stories
 - Explain to students that the images in front of them tell a story – they will try to figure out that story
4. **For each image, ask students to discuss the following:**
 - Who do you think wrote this?
 - What is the message and tone of the image?
 - Why do you think they wrote this?
 - Who is the audience?
 - What is the narrative of the image? Who has the power in this narrative?
5. **Call on students to share their ideas**
6. **Explain to students that all of the images have a common theme** – ask students to identify this theme
 - Ask for student responses – if they do not identify themes of conflict, displacement, migration, border security, and refugees, prompt them to examine these themes
7. **Write the word refugee on the board** – ask students to define this word
 - Definition from the UN Refugee Agency: A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.
8. **Ask students to consider these questions: “Should people be able to move wherever they want whenever they want?” AND/OR “Should there be any borders?”**
 - Have students brainstorm the pros and cons of borders and explain why some people may want strict borders and others more open borders.
9. **Start playing the Freakonomics Podcast “Is Migration a Basic Human Right?”**
 - <http://freakonomics.com/podcast/is-migration-a-basic-human-right-a-new-freakonomics-radio-podcast/>
10. **During the podcast, ask students to consider the following questions using examples from the podcast:**
 - Why do people move? What is their narrative about migration?
 - What problems do people encounter when they try to migrate?
 - Why do some people fear migration and migrants? What is their narrative about migration?
 - Do you think the US should have open borders? Why or why not?
11. **Discuss the questions with the students**
12. **Ask students to brainstorm what an effective border policy might entail**
 - Consider asking students to write to lawmakers about their ideas

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Photo credit: Kathryn Metz



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